

# THE CampChuck REVIEWER

*A nonprofit subsidiary of CampChuck*

Special 31.1 Travel Edition

<http://www.startlets.com>

August 5, 2010

Editor, critic, layout, distribution, and general factotum ...

**Meryl Streep Campaigns for Adult Bicycle Helmet Law** page 5

## The Waterfall-into-the-Ocean Rainforest Payoff

In the United States, only the Olympic Mountains sports a temperate rainforest. It's temperate because it's milder away from tropical climes. It's rainforest because the average rainfall averages 120 to 160 inches per year.

Even on the Olympic peninsula's Pacific coast the averages tickle the rainforest range with totals from 80 to more than 100 inches.

In our four days cavorting about Olympic National Park, we didn't get to the southern half – rich rainforest areas like Queets and Quinalt. We did, however, soak up what are brief summer periods of sunshine under the canopies of the Hoh River Basin (the lush Mosses and Spruce trails) and the Sol Duc River (the trail to its impressive waterfall).

If you have time for only one rainforest outing in Olympic National Park, the 3 mile out-and-back trail to Third Beach is the one. You getting plenty of rainforest feel for 90 percent of the hike, but you also get a special sort of payoff not typical of these rainforests.

We didn't get to Second Beach or First Beach, but Third Beach opens to the refreshing wilds of the rugged Washington state coastline. Pillar-like "sea stacks" make many beaches in the coastal portion of Olympic National park visually and geologically interesting.

Bonus on bonus, just beyond the end of Third Beach, a waterfall spills about 100 feet down a cliff just a few rocks away from toppling directly into the ocean.

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### First CampChuck Travel Edition Since 2003

I don't know why. From 1993 through 2003, seventeen special travel editions interspersed with the perennial Oscar newsletter edition of *The CampChuck Reviewer*. The special edition drought wasn't because there was a dearth of traveling.

Shrug. Our traveling leans heavily toward car camping. This time we flew. We drove rental cars. We moteled it every night, including five nights in the same motel.

We had a wonderful trip. Thanks Dario & Claire & Ryan for revving us up with a loving life connection. Thanks to the unique geology of the Olympic peninsula. Thanks to the gardens theme and engaging character of Victoria, BC – a charmed Canadian city on Vancouver Island.

### Manufactured Mailbag

Dear Editor,

Weren't you recently almost killed?

Fanga Wagglin, Lincoln, Nebraska

Dear Fanga,

I merely scared people with the prospect that bicycling into a postal truck could have yielded far worse results than a relatively nonproblematic broken collar bone and fractured skull. I should be back bicycling fairly soon.

Ed.

Find links to the Olympic peninsula and the Victoria, BC, gardens photos sets on the Photos page of [www.startlets.com/photos.html](http://www.startlets.com/photos.html).

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## Waterfalls



No doubt this creek harkens from the nearby hills rather than the steep walls up to five, six, almost eight thousand feet only about 30 miles away.

The Olympic peninsula is not what you'd call centrally located. In fact, the northwestern-most place in the contiguous United States is not too far – as the whale swims – from Third Beach. When you go, you'd do well to remind yourself that the waterfall payoff at Third Beach is more about romantic natural landscape architecture than it is about the falls itself.

Sol Duc Falls is Olympic National Park's signature waterfall, with several separate gushes pouring down the side of a narrow chasm amidst luscious green. Marymere Falls, with a tall, slender shapeliness is well-dressed by its surroundings and well anticipated during less than a mile strolling through the dense forest. Madison Falls is a modest falls experience but satisfying for how little out of the way it is. These three waterfalls align within a few dozen miles of each other off the northeast-northwest corridor of highway 101.

Surprisingly, this land of so much precipitation, so much severe mountain contour, has fewer waterfalls than you might think, especially if you categorize 20 foot high falls separately. At least, a waterfall quest demands hundreds of miles driving around the big mountain nougat at the center of Olympic National Park.

I'm especially glad about my waterfall-into-the-ocean payoff into the Pacific ocean at Third Beach.

## Government House Gardens Outclasses Butchart Gardens

I'm biased. Thousands of people visiting the Butchart Gardens the same day I'm visiting does not win points with me. On the other hand, when we pulled into the grounds of the Governor of British Columbia, there was one other tourist car. In the couple hours strolling around numerous, varied garden landscapes, we intersected with maybe two dozen people, most of whom had walked there (perhaps even resided in the neighborhood).

Government House spreads across acres and acres and acres, but unlike Butchart Gardens, the density of flowers was much homier. It seemed more personally attended than commercially spectacularized. Butchart Gardens bursts with color. At the Government House gardens, the brimming colors still seem to belong to the flowers, not to the human providers.

Please, Butchart is very impressively designed and displayed, well worth the hefty price they charge, especially if you factor in the creative and lavish fireworks we scored because we stayed late on a summer Saturday night. I'm sure the early evening concert series often provides better entertainment than the middle-aged post-fratuites we sat through.

Unlike Butchart's overpriced concessions (\$5 for a small scoop of decent gelato; \$18 for a barely edible platter of take-out food), at Government House, there are no concessions. Government House is in town (Victoria). Indeed, it is situated on a hill with a couple of marvelous views of the Juan de Fuca Straits and the snowcapped Olympic Mountains across those waters.

Did I mention the Government House gardens are free?



### Waterfall Sounds

inside white I hear

silver gray clear as sunshine  
singing me rainbows

## “You Are Not in My Group”

As I have often done in my travels, I walked into a room set aside in a motel for the continental breakfast that comes with the price of the lodging. This motel in Victoria, British Columbia, contained the usual stuff: yogurt, fruit, cereals, breads, juice, coffee....

The room also contained at least 30 people seated in an orderly manner, eating their breakfast. It did not surprise me that the breakfast room was filled with so many people, mostly young children – a tour group, no doubt, who rose early to start their day, as I do.

A woman approached me. We chatted briefly as I got my food. I sat down next to three people and began to eat.

A man walked into the room, noticed me immediately, glared at me sternly, and spoke belligerently, “You are not in my group.”

I thought this was a very funny man, who would make such a spontaneous scene in front of all his people. “Yes I am,” I said, playing along.

“You are *not* in my group,” he repeated menacingly. “How do you know?” I said, adding to this improv.

“You are not Chinese,” busting me with the obvious. “Yes I am,” which ticked the guy into slight hesitation.

“You are *not* Chinese,” he said, commanding fierce poise. “How do you know?” I continued, having not once looked away from his – wow – wholly serious posturing.

“You do not speak Chinese,” after which his foreign utterance maybe translated to, “You are a crazy person.”

I was going to say something like “Well, thank you very much,” when a middle-aged Caucasian woman darted into the room saying, “Oh, I’m so sorry. They have arranged to have this room for their tour. We are serving all our other guests in the restaurant, same continental breakfast, free, in our restaurant.”

“How could I have known?” I asked before leaving. “I’m so sorry,” the employee gushed several times. She offered me the full restaurant menu for free. I declined. She was relieved that I found this international incident quite entertaining.

## Zero to 8,000 in Thirty Miles

Sure, a skyline in the Rocky Mountains astounds, but no more so than the view of glaciated peaks from Hurricane Ridge in Olympic National Park in Washington. Mt. Olympus, just shy of 8,000 feet, and its five, six, seven thousand foot neighbors, are pipsqueaks compared with 12 to 14,000 foot Rocky Mountain peaks.

However, from Mt. Olympus, the Pacific Ocean is about 30 miles away – elevation zero. Not only is the terrain incredibly rugged, but the rainfall in what’s known as a temperate rainforest, pours at a rate of 100 to 150 inches per year.

Take the bonus drive after reaching the top of the Hurricane Ridge road. An eight-mile dirt road transports you away from the bustle of the main viewing area. At Obstruction Point, the angle toward Mt. Olympus opens. The panorama carries you further. You feel more embedded in the inner and the outer reaches.

Not incidentally, the dirt road is as scary as any two-wheel drive route I’ve traveled. There are stretches, very steep stretches, of barely two lane road. Off the road the elevation dips plummetously with never a hint of protective buffer.

My last visit, more than 30 years ago, Hurricane Ridge was socked in, visibility nada. This visit, we enjoyed perfect conditions, not the least of which was pairing the satisfaction of a snowcapped high with toe-in-the-Pacific appreciation of the rugged Washington state coastline.





# Day by Day

Ten days, untypical for no camping, all motel, including 5 consecutive nights, one motel base for Olympic National Park; about 1100 miles driving.

- 7/24 Fly Sacramento, CA – Portland, OR  
Visit Dario, Claire & Ryan [walk 2mi.]  
Downtown, Andina dinner, and Mt. Tabor
- 7/25: Dario plays piano; The Grotto [walk 1mi.]  
Dario & Claire, Ethiopian lunch, Rose Garden, Claire's & Ryan's house, tennis court chucking  
Dinner on Hawthorne
- 7/26: [Morning walk 2mi] McMenemy's Edgefield  
Fly Portland, OR – Seattle, WA  
Drive to Port Angeles, WA, Port Angeles Inn  
Dinner, Downrigger
- 7/27: Hurricane Ridge; Madison Falls; Mills Lake  
On the Elwha [walk 1mi.]  
Marymere Falls [Walk 2mi.]; Picnic dinner

- 7/28: Sol Duc Falls [walk 2mi.]  
Hoh river, Mosses & Spruce trails [walk 2mi.]  
Pillar Pt. return  
Dinner, Bushwacker
- 7/29: La Push, Third Beach & Rialto Beach  
[walk 3mi. & 2mi. to falls and arch]  
Dinner, pho Vietnamese
- 7/30: Breakfast, The Haven  
Hurricane Ridge, Obstruction Pt. [walk 2mi.]  
Dinner Michael's
- 7/31: Sand sculpture competition; harbor [walk 2mi.]  
Ferry to Victoria, BC, Comfort Inn [walk 2mi.]  
Butchart Gardens, dinner, concert & fireworks
- 8/01: Government House gardens [walk 1mi.]  
Victoria harbor BC Days "Splash" [walk 1mi.]  
Dinner, Barkley's; scenic route to Mt. Douglas
- 8/02: Ferry to Port Angeles, Drive to Seattle  
Fly to Sacramento, drive home

